

The



Bulletin

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KJA

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PRESIDENT MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Thank you for electing me as the president of KJA. It is a pleasure and honor for me to serve our community in this prestigious position. I want you to be aware that it will be a difficult task for me to duplicate the accomplishments of our last presidents. The leadership and vision provided by our last three presidents are the building foundation blocks for our future generation.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly reflect on some of the major accomplishments that were made under all past three presidents.

Our first president, Mr. Jacob Masliah has taken over the organization while it was being formed in late 1982. During his 4 years term, Mr. Masliah has overseen major important projects that included the filing to incorporate documents, the writing of the By Laws, the receipt of our tax exempt status, the establishment of the very first KJA Board, and the organization of regular monthly Saturday prayer.

Our second president, was Mr. Joe Abel. During Mr. Abel's term the KJA, conducted its first major fund raising drive, participated in the Magnus museum in Berkeley, established the late Dr. Baroukh Massuda educational fund, and organized the very first KJA camp and picnic.

Our last president, was Mr. Joe Moussa. During Mr. Moussa's term, the KJA published the Karaites Jews of Egypt book, purchased a house and converted it to a synagogue, sponsored the mission funding trip to Eastern Europe, invited Rav Hayim stay in the U.S. for 6 months, and increased the social and camps activities.



While we still have a lot to do for our community and children. I strongly feel the accomplishments made are just phenomenal and too numerous to mention. In summary, we have made major progress and gained recognition and visibility among the greater Jewish communities in the world.

Since I took over the office last March we have elected three new dedicated Board members. We are actively looking to add three female members and at least three out of the state representatives to strengthen and enhance our organization.

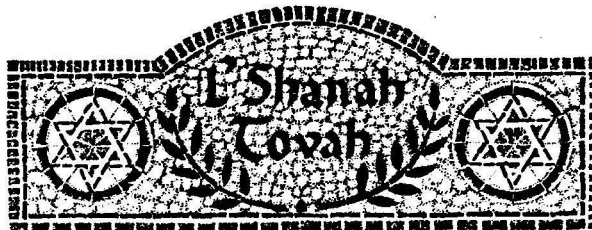
By now, you all know that we have closed the purchase of the Synagogue on July 15, 1994. We are currently working hard to get the Synagogue ready so that we can conduct our holiday prayers. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your generous donation and support. You have made it possible to purchase the Synagogue

We are looking forward to a challenging promising future; a new synagogue, a dedicated vibrant Board of Directors, and a very committed supportive community. With your continuous input and support, we will progress and succeed.

On behalf of the KJA Board of Directors, I wish you a very happy new year 5755 and holiday season. Shana Tova and Mazal Tov for the new Synagogue.

Sincerely.

*Maurice Pessah
President*



KARAITE

The Karaites are a sect of Jews who have almost been forgotten by history. Suddenly, several events have propelled them back into the news.

In San Francisco, Karaite Jews numbering iust 1,000, have purchased a house to establish their first synagogue in America. In Israel, a Karaite wedding took place in the presence of 500 guests and 10 rabbis, clustered under the "chupa". In Russia, the St.Petersburg Library opened to scholars the Firkovitch collection, which contains the greatest numbers of Karaite works, and is a true mother lode for Jewish history.

The Karaites came into being at the begining of the eighth century. The name of the sect Karaim, means "people of the Scriptures" who follow the Torah. It implies the main characteristic of the movement, which is the recognition of the Hebrew Bible, as the sole and direct source of Jewish religious law. This of course, is a rejection of the oral law, which is based on the talmudic—rabbinic tradition.

The founder was Anan Ben David, an ascetic sage, who lived in Babylonia in the eighth century, when the Karaites relected Talmudic law in favor of a "literal" interpretation of the Torah. He was influenced by the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Sadducees and contemporary Moslem thought. However, his main thrust. was the assertion of the Bible as the literal and almost sole source of Jewish practice and thought. He expressed his basic philosophy in his teaching "Search thoroughly in the Torah"

In the centuries that followed, there was much controversy between the Karaites and Rabbinites. The first systematic theological work in Judaism was written, by the eminent rabbi Saadiah Gaon on (882-942 C.E.) titled Beliefs and Opinions, as a response to the challenge of the Karaites. They produced many scholars, but the greatest mind was Abou Yousef Yacov Al-Kirk Asani who lived in the 10th century. Jerusalem became a very strong center of activity and thought.

Karaites do not observe Chanukah which is not found in the Torah, and do not call for the blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana. Karaite's law, does not permit sexual intercourse on Shabat or when the wife has the menstrual period. They do not observe the Orthodox Jews tradition, of not eating meat and drink milk, as there is absolutely no guarantee, that the meat comes from the calf which was slaughtered in front of her mother the sad cow, which lead to her milk turn sour and bad, as it happened in the very old days.

The Karaite sect spread all over the world, this included Egypt, North Africa, Babylonia, Persia and as far as the Crimea. Lately a new wave of Karaite immigrants have come to Israel from the former Soviet Union.

Today, the majority of Karaites, some 25,000 live in Israel, primarily in Ramallah, as well as in Ashdod Ofakim, Beersheva and Bat Yam. Several thousands reside in the United States mostly in San Francisco. Another 2,500 are in the former Soviet Union, mainly in the Crimea .

Most of the Karaites are Sephardic, they speak mixture of Arabic, French, Hebrew and English, unlike the Ashkenaz who speak Yiddish. The Karaite wear the Tallit with Sysitte, which they stretch them as Totafot in front of their eyes to remind them about God, while the Rabbinite wear the Tallit and instead of the Sysitte they wear the Tefiline.

Although they are recognized as Jews in Israel according to the Law of Return, the chief rabbinate calls them a "cult" of "non-Jews" . Shlomo Ovadiah a Karaite leader responded . They call us "goyim", because we don't put on "tefilin", but the Bible doesn't mention "tefilin". Is it better to put a verse of the Torah in a box on your forehead, or read it and remember what it means not to forget the name of God wherever we are.

Many American Karaites, are giving up and choosing to melt into Rabbanite or secular and reform Jewish traditions. Americanization has resulted in such innovations, as Chanukah presents and American style mitzvah celebration, instead of Karaite vitzvah during Simcha Torah's day.

An interesting aspect as to the identity of the Karaites, is to be found during the 1940s. As at the beginning of the Holocaust, the German Ministry of the Interior, expressly stipulated, that the Karaites did not belong to the religious Jewish community, because "social psychology" was considered non-Jewish, as they maintained separate communities, which also enabled Karaites to evade anti-Jewish laws under the Czars and Hitler.

On the other hand, in the Arab lands after the establishment of the State of Israel, the persecution of the Jews, caused the Karaites in Egypt, Iraq and elsewhere, to settle in Israel after they were expelled from their lands, where they were welcomed in Israel. and enabled them to carry on their particular form of Judaism, under the protection of the State, without being required to convert upon arriving in Israel .

It was a Karaite Jew named Abraham Firkovitch, who established the best collection of Hebrew manuscripts in St. Petersburg Library known as Firkovitch Collections, it numbers 15,000 Hebrew manuscripts and is the largest collection amassed in the past two centuries.

In 1830, Firkovitch accompanied the chief "chacham" (spiritual leader) of the Karaites in Crimea to Palestine. There in the Karaite synagogue in Jerusalem, he retrieved old manuscripts from the synagogue storeroom, where worn out holy books are kept until they are buried .

He continued his collection in Turkey, and at age 76, Firkovitch visited Jerusalem again as well as Cairo and Nablus, where he obtained many rare books. Then in 1962, he sold his collection to the Imperial Public Library for 25,000 rubles.

There are not more than seven old Karaites left in Cairo, where their synagogue resembles a mosque with no seats but rugs, and men remove their shoes and prostrate themselves, while their women are forbidden from entering the synagogue during their menstrual period. Their prayer book in Hebrew with Psalms and Arabic index, but contains the "Shemaa".

INTERNATIONAL KARAITES & INTERFAITH SPOUSES

Registration, Preservation & Genealogy Office

Please send letters to:
David Elie Elichaa
634 8th. Street # 4
Imperial Beach, CA 91932-1320 USA
Tel. (619) 429-1269

Karaite Jews Outside Israel And How We Can Survive

How ironic it is that so much is spent and done to preserve some endangered species on our planet and we are not trying to preserve our Roots, our Heritage, and Tradition.

Tragedy of wars and other factors are to blame for our continuous erring around on this earth. Speaking about our community in Egypt, in the 1870's we were about 200-300 families living in about 10 major cities, and we knew almost each other and we kept on trying to accustom ourselves to the life in Egypt, giving our children names translated from Hebrew. Most families had between 5-10 or more children. We used to intermarry, and in a very rare occasion we had an interfaith marriage. Now in the 1990's we are all over the world, mostly in Israel, a large community in California. With over 50% of interfaith marriages which many result in divorce, we are no longer what we used to be. Not by choice we had to go where the bread is, and unfortunately it is very hard to meet our relatives. The new generations are not aware of their ancestors (don't know their names) and can't meet their first cousins. Most of us are not in a position to teach our children the basic of our religion. Living far from a concentrated Karaite Community, we had to join other Synagogues and live like the rest of the population. No one is to blame for what is happening now. The board of directors of our Community are working hard to preserve our tradition etc....A congratulation is due for our First Synagogue, but our Synagogue can not be everywhere! Our generous contribution is helping to rebuild our community, but time is running out, and we have not prepared enough young persons to continue and follow our effort to survive. In an article published in the San Diego Jewish Magazine, our brothers, the Rabanim who are close to 5 Millions are concerned about their

interfaith marriage! If they worry what should we do and we are only around 2,000 ? We do give contribution to our community, but money won't do the work by itself, we should be more involved, and not expect someone else will do everything for us.

We have to stop criticizing our Directors who are trying to help. For few years now I started making a family tree (I followed the footsteps of my late cousin Mr. David Zaki Youssef Lichaa) and when I realized that when my mother being from a Massouda family, we were almost all related, and could considered one of the Largest Family on earth. I heard many critics about my project, and did not have the full support or response from our Community but still I did not give up. I am very grateful to Mr. Mourad El-Kodsi who helped me a lot and encouraged me, I am also very grateful to those who sent me Good comments, or as much information as they could about their family. Our situation is a hundred time more difficult than the Karaites in Israel. Where they live is maybe the size of the Los Angeles County, compared to us in the rest of the world. Our bulletin which is printed every few month is in English only, and very costly to send all over and can't be read by all. The same problem of interfaith marriage is facing the Karaites in Israel, beside they do not register any mixed marriage, they are losing a great number of our Community, and we are only growing by natural birth... Almost in every family there is one or more a mixed marriage. I wish they had kept even a separate Registration book for those mixed marriage. How can we keep track of our families, if family names have changed so much, one family name has branched to 8 new names! Our new generation don't know how we were living, how many were famous in business, profession, etc... And regardless of wealth or profession, we still loved our parents and honored them. It is our duty to teach our children about our ancestors, our relatives, write to them what we know about our family, the names of their grand parents, uncles and aunts, write the names of the persons to them at the back of pictures, that they might cherish and preserve for the next generations. I wonder why in some museums they are keeping books, and other materials belonging to the karaites if we are not an important sect of Jews.

You are not alone, together we are one of the largest family on earth. You should be proud of being a Karaite and proud of being from a pure sect and we are always loyal to the country we live in, and percentage wise we have almost no problem with the law. We are the envy of many who happened to

come in contact with and see the way we care about each other.

I know that many will not have the patience to read all this article, but for the few I hope it makes some sense, and try to spend 15 minutes of their precious time to fill the questionnaire and send it back to me in the shortest time.

I am looking for a younger person than me (I am 68 now) who knows English, French, Hebrew, and Arabic to teach him how to continue this project and keep it as the foundation of our Community.

I wish you can understand the importance of my work, and I am looking forward for your cooperation, and don't get upset if I contact you more than once, and please try to help me by giving me enough information so I can continue to preserve our roots, tradition, and leave to our next generation information that they can't get from anybody else but their parents, and hopefully they will do the same for their next generation.

Births

Jordan Pessah born to Albert & Sylvia Pessah, born in May 1994, in Illinois. Proud grandfather Jacob Pessah of California said that the merchandise was very good.



GRADUATIONS

David Pessah, son of Joe and Remy Pessah graduated from high school and will be attending CAL POLY in San Louis Obispo, California.

Mike Abel, son of Joe and Amira Abel graduated from high school and will also be attending CAL POLY in San Louis Obispo, California.

David Moussa, son of Joe and Fifi Moussa graduated from high school and will be attending the University of Arizona.

Robert Joe Ovadia son of Alan and Ferial Ovadia received his California licence in 1994.

WEDDINGS

Allan Ezial son of Amin and Denise Ezial, wedded Fran Torrell on May 29th, 1994 in California.

Shulamit Tahan daughter of Mrs. Cecilia Tahan of San Francisco, wedded to Morris Bendah son of Joseph and Lilian Bendah of San Diego, they were married in San Francisco, California, in July 24, 1994.



BAT MITZVAH

Yael Mourad daughter of Martin and Sylvia Mourad became bat mitzvah in May, 1994 in Sacramento California.



BIRTH

Jordan Pessah born to Albert & Sylvia Pessah, Born in May 1994, in Illinois. Proud grandfather Jacob Pessah of California said that the merchandise was very good.

ZEKHER

We remember the recent passing of
Sabet Darwish.



F.Y.I.

I had several people asking me who was the author of the article BEYOND FAITH published in March, 1994 KJA bulletin. The author is Albert Mourad of Sunnyvale, California. If you have a project that you would like Albert Mourad to write about, please inform KJA. Albert Mourad has time to read and inform all of us.

The deadline for submitting bulletin articles are June and January. This will enable us to send the bulletin for the holidays of Rosh Hashana and Passover.

FAVA BEAN

Do you want to grow a gigantic fava bean?

The normal height for a fava bean plant is 3 to 4 feet high. Here is the secret. Rototill deep and use a 12-12-12 fertilizer in early October and plant the seeds in October and November. As the plant grows it must be staked and tied as well as receive plenty of water. You will be glad to harvest an 8 feet high plant in May and June. It is an easy winter crop in California and the best part is sharing it with families and friends.



PESSAH celebrates PESSAH



This year the whole Pessah family and some friends celebrated Passover together in Roger Pessah's home.

PURIM PARTY

As always the Purim party was enjoyed by everyone and filled with a lot of fun. The best dressed costume for kids went to Rachel Moussa and Joshua Saleh. The food was prepared by Rahel Farag and she was helped by a lot of volunteers.

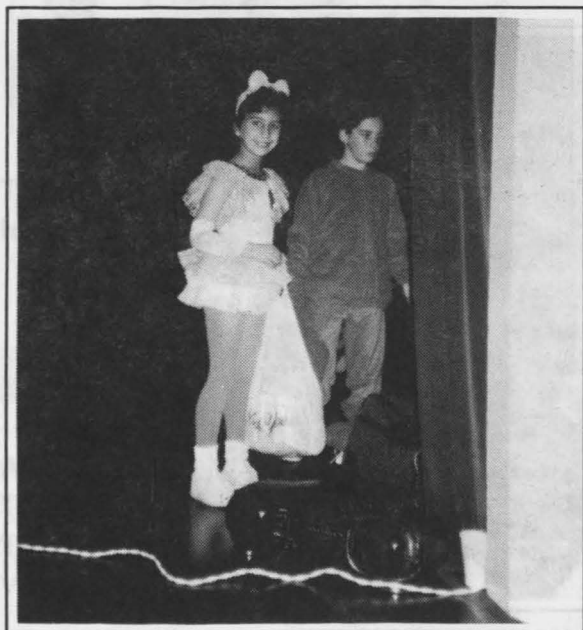


A presentation was made to Mr. Emiel Kheder thanking him and his wife for their dedication in acting as Shammas for our Synagogue.



Dancing the Hora, our former president, Joe Moussa.

As always, Jacob Moussa is dealing, selling the lottery tickets to Denise Ezial and Nancy Dubner, while Victor Khedr is watching.



Rachel Moussa, dressed as queen Esther, won best costume award. Standing next to her is Sabrina Sutherland.

How to be Happy

*"Keep your heart free from hate
your mind free from worry,*

*Live simply, expect little,
Give much, sing often,
Pray always.*

*Fill your life with love,
Scatter Sunshine, forget self,
Think of others.*

Do as you would be done by.

*These are the tried links
in contentment's gold chain."*

Proverbs: 14 - no. 23

*"In all labor there is profit;
but the talk of the lips
tendeth only to penury."*

*Fred Saleh
Pikesville, MD*

AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR NEW PRESIDENT

This is the first time we are conducting such and interview. We are hoping to give you some valuable information.

Question: Would you please tell us a little bit about yourself ?

Answer: I will try to make it quick and not bore you. My name is Maurice Pessah, I am the son of Yacoub and Rachel Pessah of South San Francisco, California. I am 41 years old and married to Lillian Daniel, the daughter of Abraham and Suzanne Daniel of Skokie Illinois. I have 3 children Joshua (12 years), Aaron (7 years), and Marc (3.5 years). We reside in San Jose, which is located 50 miles South of San Francisco.

Question: What do you do for living?

Answer I am an independent consultant in the area of networks and Information Systems.

Question: How long have you been associated with the KJA and its Board of Directors?

Answer: Ever since its inception back in September of 1982. I was the organization first Secretary and held several executive positions during the last 12 years. You can say that I have been there since day one !

Question: So you are an old timer! Can you tell us a little about some of the major events or milestone that occurred during the last 12 years?

Answer: Are you ready to write a book? Frankly, there are many, some of them are stated in the President's message. I will tell you about 2 events where I strongly felt good and happy. To begin with, the day we have obtained the Tax Exempt Number from the federal government in early 1984. At that time the organization did not have fund to pay a lawyer around \$3,000.00 to do and file all necessary papers, so I purchased How To do Book for \$24.95 and

got together with Alan Ovadia and Joe Pessah and filled up all the required documents. Of course, we made some errors that delayed things a little bit, but we made the necessary corrections and were able to obtain a Tax Exempt ID #.

The second event and perhaps the most important milestone in our organization history is the purchase of our new Synagogue. It's a goal that we all have been waiting for. Our Fund Raising drive for the new Synagogue was by far the most successful ever. The response and percentage of donors were just unbelievable. I can honestly tell you that I have felt the happiness and joy of our community.

Question: What do you want to accomplish during the next 4 years as the President of KJA?

Answer: While I have very few and specific goals, I am very realistic and know you can only do so much. I will be very happy if I could make some progress in the following two areas:

1. Be more of a pro-active and communicative president. That is, to keep in touch with our community and to let them know what we are doing in the Board. I also would love to hear their inputs, complaints, and suggestions. This is the only way we will be able to improve and serve our community.
2. Increase and have a better bulletin publication that will be culturally, religiously, and socially informative to the whole community. This is probably the most important goal. The Bulletin is our only vehicle of communication. Our people like to see pictures, read stories about their friends, or learn something about our religion.



HELPING OUR CHILDREN BUILD MEMORIES

We successfully have a camp every year to let our children meet other children with the same background.

We always have a great time.

These are some of the important reason to come to camp:

Meet new people • Make friends • Have fun • Learn the Religion • Learn to be disciplined • Try new food • Field trips • Shabat Prayer • Circus Circus visit • Art and Craft • Waive runners • Swimming, boating and beach activities.

Next year 7-11 and 12-16 camp will be from July 2nd thru July 9th 1995. We need campers as well as volunteers.

If you have any questions, please call me.

Elie Moussa

(415) 591-6183



We wish the Karaite Jews of America

a Very Happy New Year

Full of Good Health, Happiness & Peace

12-16 GROUP



Top left

Shawn Lichaa, Debra Ovadia, Lily Lichaa, Nora Massuda, Nora Hartman,
Oreett Moussa, Ben Ovadia, Avi Moussa, Elea Filiminov.



7-11 and 12-16



Lower left

Alexander Pessah, Sheila Pessah, Amy Rasson, Ryan Pessah, Debbie Ovadia, Rachel Moussa, David Ovadia, Joel Massuda, Elea Filiminov, Aaron Pessah, Berry Ovadia, Jeremy Ovadia, Shawn Rasson, Debra Ovadia, Lily Lichaa, Nora Massuda, Nora Hartman, Oreett Moussa, Michael Pessah, Ben Ovadia, Avi Moussa, Shawn Lichaa.



KJA SUPER MATCH

I would like to introduce my self to you:

My name is Kamy May, I have a M.S. Degree in Education and Clinical Counseling. I have many years of experience working with children, adults, couples and families. I have trained, helped and advised many people successfully.

Now is the time for me to help my community, if you let me.

"It's not good or healthy to be alone in this world !

KJA Super Match is a non-profit and sophisticated matching service. It is created to help KJA singles, divorced, widow over 25 years old any where in the world:

1, to get together with their soul mate 2, to keep our small community alive.

We are scattered all over the world, and if we are not going to help singles to marry within our people, there may will be no future for us as a Karaite community, and that is devastating to us. I have known many relatives and friends who "tried to better themselves", left us for others who aren't from our community,, many of them regret it and are unhappy for doing so.

Singles everywhere please be happy, be proud and feel lucky that you were born into a Karaite family. As you know, you can leave the community at any time, but others can't come in. Please keep our traditions going on, we are very much in need for your help. Please marry within our community, and if you have a problem in doing so, we will try to help you in the best way we know.

If you are, or someone else you know is interested in this free service, please don't hesitate to contact me. I will send you, or send them a confidential questionnaire to help me match you with a super match person. This questionnaire is for serious people only.

Please send self addressed stamped envelope and write to:

*Kamy May
P.O. Box 2054 • Livermore, CA 94551*

